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SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/ARPI (TROBERTS), NEA/PPD (CWHITTLESEY), NEA/P
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LONDON FOR GOLDRICH
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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: SPECIAL MEDIA REACTION: FULL OF PRAISE FOR FTA

Open Economies, Increased Opportunities

[1](#). On March 12, the government-owned Arabic daily "Oman" carried an editorial entitled "Welcoming the FTA Negotiations":

"Concluding the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between the Sultanate of Oman and the United States will eventually reduce the competitive pressure on Omani merchants to market and sell their products, particularly in the textile market, which has had to compete vigorously with products from other countries. The FTA will allow these types of Omani products to enter the US market free of any duties or other financial obligations. On the other side, the Omani market will also gain the opportunity to attract US investments. The Sultanate is very much committed to its obligations within the Arab League and the GCC, but is equally keen to boost its trade links with various regional as well as international parties."

Shared Vision, Shared Goals

[2](#). "Oman" also published an editorial on March 13 entitled "Toward Further Integration In The World Economy":

"While the first round of negotiations is underway, there is much hope and optimism that this round will achieve the goals it has set. Hopes have been enhanced about the possibility of achieving tangible results during this and coming rounds, due to the well-established ties between the two friendly nations. This hope is based not only on the long history of amity between the two countries and peoples, but also on the genuine will by both nations to further develop their relations to better serve their mutual interests. The FTA negotiations add another dimension in support of this multidimensional relationship which will have a positive impact for the two countries and also for the whole region."

Results And Next Steps

[3](#). On March 14, "Oman" published an article entitled "Today The Announcement Of The Results Of The First Round Of Negotiations Between The Sultanate And The United States":

"The working teams formed to discuss the topics related to the FTA negotiations between the Sultanate and the United States will continue today in order to accomplish what had been discussed during the past two days. The most important topics discussed during this first round of negotiations have been: services, technical barriers to trade, intellectual property rights, textiles sector, labor, and legal affairs, access to markets, customs, and certificates of origin, investment and financial services, and government procurement. Today, Maqbool Ali Sultan, Minister of Commerce and Industry, and Catherine Novelli, Assistant U.S. Trade Representative to Europe and the Mediterranean, and head of the American negotiating team will hold a joint press conference explaining what decisions have been reached at the conclusion of the first round of negotiations and will secure the dates for the upcoming second round of FTA negotiations to be held in Washington, D.C."

BALTIMORE